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JANAB ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI :—" May I know whether the Government propose to hold any enquiry, Sir? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" No, Sir."

Issue of Press Notes and Communiqués by the Director of Information and Publicity.

* 2 Q.—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have perused the judgment of the High Court in the Contempt of Court proceedings in which the Director of Information and Publicity was involved;

(*b*) what the procedure adopted is in regard to issue of Press Notes and Communiqués by the Director of Information and Publicity;

(*c*) whether the Director of Information and Publicity is entitled to exercise his discretion either in issuing or withholding publication of the Press Notes and Communiqués prepared by the Departments of the Government; and

(*d*) whether, in view of the remarks of the Hon. Judges of the High Court in the Contempt of Court proceedings referred to, the Government propose to devise ways to secure immunity to the Director of Information and Publicity in respect of Press Notes prepared by other Departments of Government?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) Yes.

" (*b*) Press Communiqués and Press Notes are drafted by Departments of the Secretariat and are issued by the Director of Information and Publicity after they are approved in circulation to the concerned Hon. Minister, Hon. Minister for Public Works, and Hon. Chief Minister. Secretaries to Government are responsible for the contents of Press Communiqués and Press Notes and the Director of Information and Publicity is responsible for the manner of presentation of the information.

" (*c*) No.

" (*d*) The suggestion is being examined."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Sir, in view of the judgment of the High Court, will the Director of Publicity be allowed to use his discretion to withhold a portion or the whole of the Communiqué if he finds it is not in public interest and he will be coming within the ambit of law if such a publication is made? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" The Director of Publicity will have that discretion and he will exercise that discretion in consultation with the Department and the Hon. Minister concerned."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know, whether in this present case such a discretion was exercised? "

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THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Here, however, the Director of Information was not aware of the proceedings and therefore there was no occasion for him to exercise that discretion."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Sir, in a serious matter like this where an officer of the Government, the head of a department, is practically held guilty of contempt of court, will the Government see that the Director of Publicity is given the discretion or else let the Department themselves undertake to publish it, instead of making the Director of Publicity a scape-goat? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I have already said that the situation arising out of this judgment is under examination."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Is the Director of Publicity now competent to consult the Legal Department if he finds that any Press Communiqué or Press Note prepared by any department, in his opinion, infringes the law? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Certainly, Sir."

Appointment of Honorary Magistrates.

* 3 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Education be pleased to state—

(*a*) what the procedure adopted in regard to the appointment of Honorary Magistrates of all classes in the City and the State was;

(*b*) whether there has recently been any change in the system and if so, what it is; and

(*c*) whether in the districts where the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive has been effected, the Collectors continue to be the recommending authorities?

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" (*a*) The procedure adopted in regard to the selection of persons for appointment as Honorary Magistrates prior to July 1949 is indicated in the appendix extracted from the relevant Government Orders.

" (*b*) The following changes have been made in the procedure :—

City—

(1) the Mayor of Madras is not a member of the selection committee.

(2) There is only one Member of the Legislature on the committee instead of one M.L.A. and one M.L.C.

(3) A non-official member has been included in the selection committee.

Mufassal—A non-official member has been included in the selection committee.

" (*c*) The answer is in the affirmative.